Backgammon: Ancient Game, New Features

Backgammon is amongst the most ancient of games and yet even today refinements are being made to the game. Nowhere is this more evident than with version 2.3 backgammon. Although the new version of backgammon on INN has had more than 20 improvements and features added, it remains fully compatible with all previous versions.

Some of the new features of v2.3 backgammon are:

☞ **New Dice Algorithm:** Those of you who have been blaming the dice all along for your poor rolls, may actually have had a case. Errors in the dice rolling algorithm have been found and corrected in v2.3. The dice in v2.3 are determined at the moment they are rolled based on human interaction. It now is as similar to rolling real dice as you can get on a computer.

☞ **Move Verify and Undo:** Has this ever happened to you? You roll a 2-1 and proceed to play the two, but instead the point one away grabbed your stone as you let go, thus ruining a great play (and often making you want to kink yourself). When you have Move Verify turned on, you will be given the opportunity to Undo your completed moves and replay them before sending the plays to your opponent.

☞ **Board Notation and Move Log:** v2.3 backgammon has a couple of useful learning features which will help beginners and pros alike improve their game. Players can discuss moves easily while using the optional Board Notation feature that lets players number the points from either player's perspective. Another useful feature is the Move Log which will write a record of moves as they are played to a file that can later be reviewed and studied while off-line.
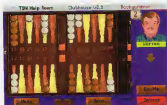
☞ **Auto-Roll:** Probably the most asked question about backgammon on INN is "Why does the program force you to roll when you are closed-out on the bar?" This question has been addressed in v2.3 by allowing players the option of rolling their own dice in this situation as before or by having the program roll your dice for you automatically. Some may ask, "Why not just pass that players turn completely?" One reason is we had to maintain compatibility with previous versions of backgammon, but an even better reason is that players must still be able to offer a "Double" even though closed-out.

NEVER WALK ALONE

In addition to those major new features, there are many other new things about v2.3 backgammon including a Verbose On/Off mode in which players can choose to turn off unnecessary text messages which knowledgeable backgammon players do not need. The Double notice has been moved so that players can see the whole board in order to make a decision about accepting or declining a double. Improved graphics and animation speed adjustment for the dice and stones also enhance play.

Despite the numerous changes, there were some things that could not be changed in v2.3 due to compatibility issues. However, you can be sure that the backgammon on INN will continually improve in the versions ahead.

☞ Compete Against The Best!

For those who love backgammon competition, there are regular backgammon tournaments sponsored by INN every couple of months. See the bulletin boards in the Tournaments room in the Clubhouse for details.

The independently run Backgammon League meets every Wednesday night in the Backgammon Den in the Clubhouse. The Backgammon League currently has 80 members and has been going strong for more than two years. If you're looking for the best backgammon on INN, the Backgammon League is where you'll find it! The next Backgammon League begins January 5, 1994. For details about the Backgammon League, you may send e-mail to me at box 2026 or check out the League Bulletin Boards in the Backgammon Den.

Whether you're an avid or casual backgammon player, be sure you have v2.3 of ImagiNation!

INN Tournaments

INN offers a variety of different types of tourneys. We have tourneys for the serious gamers and tourneys just for the fun of it. We are currently offering tourneys in Backgammon, Cribbage, Hearts, Checkers, Flip/Flop, Chess, and Bridge in the Clubhouse. Also in Sierraland we have tourneys in Boogers, SneakATac, MiniGolf and PaintBall. Soon we will be starting a Poker tourney in CasinoLand (fomerly Larryland).

These tourneys are a lot of fun and good clean competion. We have competions that anyone from the beginner to the pro can play in. They are open to all age groups. Prizes for these tourneys are Free online time and Sierra games. The tourneys are offered every night of the week and on weekends. The main reason for the tourneys are to meet people and to have fun. We have had people meet in tourneys that are now getting married and others that meet just to have a great fun time with new friends. Tourneys are a great way to meet new people.

New tourneys are starting all the time. All tourneys will be announced in our on-line newsletter and in the Tournament rooms. We are also working on new tourneys for all the new games that are being offered now on INN. So come join the fun and join in a tourney soon. See you on line.

The Shadow of YSERBIUS

The Ultimate Multi-User Dungeon!

"You'll be hooked long after you solve the volcano's mysteries."
—QuestBusters

Welcome to 'The Shadow of Yserbius,' the multi-player fantasy roleplaying epic on The ImagiNation Network. Join real people in real time as you search for the secrets of a cursed Kingdom buried beneath a live volcano.

Everyone you meet could be a real live person, as literally thousands of people gather each night to experience the multi-player dungeon epic that Strategy Plus Magazine calls "champion among multi-player fantasy games...a game too big for just one player."

Team up with a Wizard from Wisconsin, a Knight from New Jersey or a Thief from DC. Build your character by completing quests, acquiring spells, and gaining experience as you explore the labyrinths. Talk to Elves, Trolls, Gnomes, Dwarves, Orcs and maybe even a few humans from all over America.

And you can take a FREE tour of the dungeons, just by calling the number to the right. You'll meet the nicest people.

Some of them may even let you live.

GO CLIMB A TREE
Paths and Sub-Directories Explained

Have you ever found yourself staring at the computer screen showing only C:\> and receiving the dreaded 'Bad Command or File Name' error message? Frequently this happens when you are trying to run a file that is not in your current directory. Perhaps I can recount a training session I recently had with a friend .

Sara: (after turning on computer) What's this?

...: It's all my files.

Scotty: ALL?!

...: Can you help me?

Scotty: You can only have 512 files in a directory. No wonder you are having problems.

...: Help me? For a cookie?

Scotty: Well, OK. First with all these files here, do you know which belongs to which program?

...: don't think so.

Scotty: In DOS, you are allowed to organize your files into directories. This keeps files that work with each other together. Think of the directory structure like a tree.

...: Even with a bark?

Scotty: But it doesn't bite. Actually, the structure is called a TREE and the main directory you see here is called the ROOT directory. From here you can create branches or subdirectories, and its these directories where you should be storing similar files. In fact within these subdirectories, you can create smaller subdirectories or branches.

...: Smaller branches? You're going to put a limb now, aren't you?

Scotty: This way your disk is clean and orderly. Look at your TSN directory. Within this directory we have other directories. The SL subdirectory has SierraLand files, your Yserblus directory has Yserblus files and your Twinlon directory has Twinlon files. These are all within your TSN directory. Do you see how they are grouped?

Sara: What happens when I try to run one program from another program's directory?

Scotty: Then you'd get your classic 'Bad Command or File Name' error.

Sara: Kinda like barking up the wrong tree, isn't it?

Scotty: Exactly.

Sara: How can I get a listing of my files?

Scotty: You can type DIR. That will give you the list of all your files in the current directory. The listings with <DIR> next to them indicate subdirectories of the directory we are currently in. To go to your data directory, we type CD\DATA. The CD stands for "Change Directory". I see here you have subdirectories beneath DATA for LETTERS, REPORTS, and BUDGETS by the <DIR> on the directory listing. Maybe there is hope for you let.

Sara: OK, how can I now get a file listing in LETTERS?

Scotty: From here in the ROOT directory, we type CD\DATA\LETTERS. Then we type DIR to get a listing of your files. Oh, here's a file named BOARHEAD.TXT. I won't even ask what that is. The PATH is the exact location of a file from the root directory to its subdirectory. Ok, here is your first test. What is the PATH to get to BOARHEAD.TXT?

Sara: Uh, is it C:\DATA\LETTERS?

Scotty: Correct! Sara: Tell me what I've won, Vanna. Scotty: Just like you have to follow a specific line of branches to get to one leaf on tree, you follow a PATH to get to this file.

Sara: How do I know which directory I'm in?

Scotty: You see the C: prompt? Lets type in PROMPT PG and see what happens.

Sara: Kewl!

Scotty: Your drive and directory information now shows up as your prompt. You will now know where in your directory tree you are at all times. If you insert this line in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file, if will run eachtime you turn on your computer.

Sara: OK, you've convinced me. Its good to get organized here. But how do I make a new directory?

Scotty: Simple.

Sara: Good.

Scotty: First, keep in mind that a directory can only be 8 characters in length. Now we will make a subdirectory off the root directory called Graphics. We make sure we are in the root directory and type the command: MD GRAPHICS. MD stands for "Make Directory". Now we are ready to copy your graphics files there. By the way, if you need to delete a directory, it must be totally empty. We would type RD GRAPHICS, which stands for "Remove Directory", if we wanted to remove the same directory we just created.

Sara: OK, we have made our way around the disk, through directory paths, and even made a directory.

Scotty: Remember, there is an organized place for every file, and the computer must know where to find that file.

Sara: That's right. We'll be able to find our files a lot faster if all the files that work together are in the same location. Scotty: Good, now lets type TREE. You will then see all the directories and subdirectories on your disk, and if you type TREE /F, you'll also get the files added to that listing.

Sara: This is really great! I feel so organized!

Scotty: That's great, but knowing you as well as I do, I really hope that you'll stay organized.

Sara: Scotty... Go climb a TREE.

Tech Help Is Just A Phone Call Away

Hobbies/Interests
Education
Computers
Headphone
Music

INNKyle_27 Network Technician

Greetings to all my old, new, and future friends. My name is INNKyle and I'm here to answer your technical questions about The ImagiNation Network. You can write to me on-line at box 892. This column is for you, so let me know what questions you have or what you would like to see here.

ImagiNation is a pioneer. From the comfort of your home (or office), you can join people in cyberspace for chats, for games, to put your ideas on bulletin boards, read others' opinions, or join in special interest groups through our on-line conferences. The possibilities are endless, and ImagiNation couldn't be easier to use. From the FaceMaker to Fort Fun, or from Monte Carlo to MedievaLand, interacting with others is just a mouse and a move away!

Even with all the effort we've put into ImagiNation to make it easy and fun to use, you may need help sometime along the way since there are so many different combinations of computers, modems, and peripherals out there. ImagiNation is prepared and has an award-winning Member Services staff just a phone call away. Dial 1-800-IMAGIN-1 (1-800-462-4461) and your needs will be taken care of quickly

and courteously.

When you do call, the more you know about your system and account, the better we can help you. Having your modem number or mailbox number handy when you call lets us retrieve your information faster. If you're calling for technical support, knowing the local access number you're calling, your modem model, how much free RAM your machine has available, and most importantly the error number (if any) you received is a big help.

You can find out how much free RAM you have by typing MEM at any DOS prompt and writing down the number under "Largest Executable Program Size" (DOS 5.0), or the number under "Free Conventional Memory" (DOS 6.0). It is also a good idea if you have a printed copy of your AUTOEXEC.BAT, CONFIG.SYS files and a list of any drivers loaded in memory that may be used by peripherals, such as a sound card or CD-ROM.

I'll be looking forward to your letters and questions and will try to answer as many as possible and cover any other topics you find interesting. Until then, TTYL (Type To You Later)!

IN

Managing Your Memory

Hobbies/Interests
Computers
Electronics
Camp, Gymnos
Music

TSJ5J__52, Toledo, Ohio

A lot of people have asked me about MS-DOS 6.00 DoubleSpace and some people are losing connection because they are running out of available ram. This is because DoubleSpace uses 40K of conventional memory, the same memory that INN uses.

I have devised a solution for people who use MS-DOS 6.00. This version of DOS has a startup facility that you can use to create a type of "menu" that will let you choose between your normal boot up or one written for INN. Choosing INN instead of NORMAL gives you the maximum amount of conventional memory available to INN.

These directions are for a member who is comfortable with DOS and making changes

to their system. If you get lost in the first few paragraphs here, you may want to ask a friend that has a little more experience with computers to make these changes for you.

Use your favorite editor to make these changes. < Place your original CONFIG.SYS data here! > means your existing CONFIG.SYS should appear in this area of the file; the same goes for the AUTOEXEC.BAT This example makes changes to the beginning and end of your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

As is the case any time you are adjusting system startup files, it's a good idea to have a backup of them so they can be restored in case something goes wrong. You can make a copy of these files by typing COPY C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT C:\AUTOEXEC.BAK[enter] and COPY C:\CONFIG.SYS C:\CONFIG.BAK[enter] at the C:\>.

Now let's make the changes! To use the DOS editor, type EDIT C:\CONFIG.SYS at the C:\>. If you use a word processor to change these files, make SURE you save them as ASCII or TEXT files. Lastly, don't type anything you see in parentheses, these are just notes of things that might be different depending on your setup.

Add the following lines to the BEGINNING of your CONFIG.SYS:

```
[Menu]
MenuItem=Normal,Normal Startup!
MenuItem=TSN,TSN
[Normal]
< Place your original CONFIG.SYS data here! >
```

Add the following lines to the END of your CONFIG.SYS:

```
[TSN]
Set AutoFIL=TSN
Switches=F
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE
DOS=HIGH,UMB
BUFFERS=8
FILES=40 (you can make this number higher, 40 is the minimum for INN)
LASTDRIVE=E
SHELL=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM /p /e:256
DEVICEHIGH=C:\DOS\DBLSPACE.SYS /MOVE
```

Save the file as C:\CONFIG.SYS. Now, let's make the changes to your AUTOEXEC.BAT!

Add the following lines to the BEGINNING of your AUTOEXEC.BAT:

```
IF .%AUTOFIL% == .TSN GOTO TSN
ECHO Starting System Normally
< Place your original AUTOEXEC.BAT data here! >
```

Add the following lines to the END of your AUTOEXEC.BAT:

```
GOTO NOWHERE
Echo INN Memory Configuration Started!
PROMPT $p$g
PATH = C:\DOS
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
LOADHIGH MOUSE.COM (or whatever file is necessary to activate your mouse)
CD TSN (Use CDINN if you are using v2.3)
TSN (Use INN if you are using v 2.3)
:NOWHERE
PROMPT
```

Save the file as C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT. Now, REBOOT your machine. Remember, if things aren't working right, or if your machine "hangs up" in the middle of booting, turn the power off, and, while the message "Starting MS-DOS" appears, strike the F5 key. This will abort loading of the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT, and will take you directly to a C:\> prompt.

IN

INNteractive Network University

are very few limitations on what we can
offer in our University, and we intend to
take full advantage of that to offer a truly
broad range of fascinating subjects. From
intimate study groups, to lectures reaching
a national audience, we offer a flexible and
enjoyable learning environment. We are
hopeful that eventually, through affiliation
with an accredited national institute, we
will be able to offer college credit for some
of our courses. All that, and a fast and easy
commute, too!

> **Watch your INN mailbox for schedules
> of the following classes:**
>
> ### INN GAMES
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Cribbage | Backgammon |
> | Chess | Hearts |
> | Poker | MedievalLand |
> | Bridge | Euchre |
> | Spades | Go |
>
> ### APPLICATIONS & PROGRAMMING
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Home Accounting | DOS |
> | Quick BASIC | C++ |
> | Creative Writing | Assembly |
>
> ### SELF-HELP WORKSHOPS
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Twelve Step Recovery | Ask The Doctor |
> | SGLA | HIV / AIDS Information |
> | Poetry Workshop | Overeaters Anonymous |

Many instructional classes are already
being taught on INN. Some of these will
become a part of the INNteractive Network
University. The New Member Orientation
will still be a great introduction to all of the
services ImagiNation has to offer our
newest members. The Chess and Bridge
organizations have such a strong member
involvement that, even though the
University will offer classes in these games,
we expect additional opportunities for
member involvement to continue to exist
with the user groups directly.

Beginning in December, we will be offer-
ing a wide variety of the classes free of
charge, that best meets the current needs
of our membership. As we gain experience
with the on-line education medium, more
classes will be added, and our schedule of
classes will expand.

Watch for announcements of new classes
in the On-Line Times and here in future
issues of ImagiNings. Your comments and
suggestions are always welcome. Please send
them to the University at mail box # 777.

New INN pricing

options and
pricing in
effect as of
December 31,
1993 until
December 31, 1994 or, at your option,
choose to switch to one of the new member-
ship and pricing plans if it better suits their
needs and usage patterns.

The new memberships offer access to *all*
areas of ImagiNation and include INN
Stamps as well. There is no longer an extra
charge for access to each land or to send e-
mail. However, CasinoLand (formerly
LarryLand) is still limited to access by
adults only and requires that proof of age be
submitted before access is granted.

There is also no longer a surcharge for
daytime use. The same low rates apply 24
hours a day, seven days a week! In addition,
there is a built-in discount schedule for pre-
paid, long-term membership subscriptions.
There are now three different INN
Memberships:

Membership Type	Monthly Fee	Hours Included
Basic	$9.95	5
Gold	$49.95	25
Platinum	$99.95	50

Hours included in memberships can be
used 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
Additional hours are $3.50 per hour.
Special Access numbers are subject to a $2
per hour surcharge.

Subscription Discounts*	
3 Months	10% Off
6 Months	15% Off
12 Months	20% Off

*Pre-pay a multiple-month subscription and receive
the above discount off of your total monthly fees.
Discount does not apply to Additional Hour or
Special Access surcharge fees.

This new membership structure and pric-
ing means that, for example, by subscribing
to INN as a Basic Member for one year,
your monthly membership fee can be less
than $8 per month. It has been developed in
response to the many ImagiNation mem-
bers, current and past, who have requested
both lower fees for less hours and unre-
stricted daytime access. In addition, it
offers a much simplified rate structure, dis-
counts for long-term members and com-
plete access to all of the fun and games in
all of the lands of ImagiNation.

To switch to one of the new membership
plans, or to join (or re-join) ImagiNation,
just call INN at 1-800-IMAGIN-1. A Member
Services Representative will be happy to
assist you.

INN WELCOMES SANTA TO IMAGINATION

Kids of all ages may write to Santa on INN at Box 123. So make your list and he can check it twice. I'm sure he'll find out if you've been naughty or nice.